

## A STUDY OF THE WORD BAQIYA (REMNANT) IN THE QUR'ĀN: ITS HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

YOUSSRY GUIRGUIS

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

### Abstract

The Qur'ānic word *baqiya* بَقِيَّةٌ (“remnant”) refers to the part that is left from a larger portion, whether it be food, material for making a garment, or even a group of people. In the Qur'ān, it could also refer to someone set aside for a sacred purpose. These individuals are often referred to as “the remnant.” Allāh places great value on such a one.

The Arabic term *wabaqiyyatun* (وَبَقِيَّةٌ), formed by the conjunction *wa* (“and”) and the nominative feminine indefinite noun *baqiyyatun*, derives from the root *baqiya*, conveying the meaning of “that which remains” or “what is left.” As it occurs in the Qur'ān (cf. *Sūwar* 2:248, 278; 11:86, 116; 53:51; 55:27), the term carries profound theological and moral implications. It is often linked to what remains after a trial or calamity, serving as a symbol of divine favor, endurance, or the enduring presence of something valuable.

This paper explores *wabaqiyyatun* from a *Tafsīr* (exegetical) perspective, examining its occurrences in the Qur'ānic text and how it has been interpreted by classical and contemporary scholars. By analyzing the contexts in which this term appears, we will uncover its nuanced meanings and the way the Qur'ān uses the word “remnant” (*baqiyyatun*) to convey theological themes. We will also see how it imparts moral teachings, spiritual resilience, and becomes a symbol of

hope, particularly in the face of tribulations and trials. The term *baqiyyatun* (بَقِيَّةٌ), meaning “remnant,” also plays an important role in Islāmic eschatology, particularly in relation to *al-Ma‘ād* (“the Return” or “the Hereafter”), and is closely connected with the concepts of *al-Najāt* (“salvation”) and *al-Ḥukm* (“judgment”). Through this exploration, this paper seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the term *baqiyyatun*, not just as a linguistic concept, but also as a term denoting the eschatological remnant people within the broader Qur’ānic narrative.

*Keywords:* Qur’ān, remnant, Day of Judgment (يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ, Yawm al-Qiyāmah), wabaqiyyatun, al-Ma‘ād, al-Najat

## 1. Introduction

A focus on “the end-time events” has become an increasingly prevalent topic among both the religious and the secular, in the face of natural and political crises. A discussion of the remnant becomes highly relevant to the present time. Any emphasis on the last days must include the concern of who will endure to the end and who will survive the final events. Another way of asking the question is, who will be “the remnant”? For the Abrahamic faiths, “the end” is always associated with a final judgment. In Islam, the question is not just who will survive “the end” catastrophes, but who will survive the final judgment—a judgment adjudicated by Allāh. It is appropriate that the ones who will pass through the judgment be called “the remnant.”

Although Christians are familiar with the biblical idea of the “remnant,” many may not realize that this theme is also a significant subject of discussion in the Qur’ān and Islāmic *Kalām* (Scholastic Theology). While the idea of a “remnant” is not as explicit in the Qur’ān as it is in the Bible, the notion of a faithful group preserved by Allāh is found in Islāmic teachings. To benefit both those who are familiar and unfamiliar with the concept of the “remnant,” and to engage Islāmic scholars, I present this study on the idea of the “remnant” in Islām.

Linguistically, the Qur’ānic concept of the remnant denotes what is left over from a larger whole after an ordeal or period of testing. Spiritually, it refers to a small but faithful group who remain devoted to God when the majority turns away, distinguishing themselves through moral integrity, spiritual commitment, and a life fully aligned with their faith.

This article examines the word *baqiya* (بَقِيَّةٌ) in six occurrences found

across four different *Sūwar* (2:248, 278; 11:86, 116; 53:51; and 55:27). The study begins with a linguistic analysis of *baqiya*, exploring its various nuances and meanings. It then analyzes each occurrence within its respective *Sūrah*, considering essential exegetical elements: the rationale for selecting each *Sūrah*, historical context, text and translation, word studies, and syntax.

These steps help readers understand why the term appears in each context and what purpose it serves. The three historical *Sūwar* 2:248, 278 and 53:51 are summarized into a few paragraphs, in order to allow more exploration of *Sūwar* 11:86, 116, and 55:27, which more explicitly discuss concepts relevant for the eschatological group of people called "the remnant."

The article also offers a brief overview of the use of *baqiya* in Ṣūfism. Since the term has been employed within mystical interpretations of the Qur'an, it is important to recognize how it functions in Islāmic mysticism— an integral aspect of Islāmic theology.

The study concludes with several missiological reflections, suggesting what Christians may learn from this exploration and how it may contribute to building bridges between Islām and Christianity.

## 2. The Linguistics of *Baqiya*

The word *baqyyiah* ("remnant") comes from the verb *baqqa* in the imperative form, attributed to the feminine singular pronoun "you." Its root and stem derive from *baq*, consisting of the root letters *b+a+q*. Out of the word *baqyyiah* appears the infinitive *baqiya* بَقِيَ, meaning "to remain," "to endure," or "to last permanently," which shows in the Qur'an about 21 times.<sup>1</sup> The noun *baqiya* (plural *baqāyā*) refers to "rest," "remnant," or "residue."<sup>2</sup> It can also signify "preservation," "legacy left," "relics remaining," or "to survive." Out of *baqiya* derives the expression, *al-bāqiya al-baqiyah* (البقية الباقية), meaning "the last remnant." In addition, *baqiya* denotes the idea of "maintaining"<sup>3</sup> something or someone that has persisted or endured after others have faded away.

The word *baqiya* is often "used as a war cry" by members of the State of

<sup>1</sup> 'Abdul Mannān 'Omar, *Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an: Arabic Words-English Meanings* (Hockessin, Germany: Noor Foundation International, 2010), 60.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 3rd ed., ed. J. Milton Cowman (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1976), 69.

<sup>3</sup> James E. Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 112.

Iraq and Syria (ISIS), understood as the remnant of Islām.<sup>4</sup> It also means a “consolidating control over existing territory and losing some people.”<sup>5</sup> In a war setting, the idea suggests that the *remaining* ones will persist and endure, despite the effort to eliminate them or their encounter with opposition. For instance, the words *baqiya wa Tatamaddad* (بَاقِيَةٌ وَتَتَمَدَّدُ), meaning “remaining and expanding,” focus “on fighting locally and instituting local governance.”<sup>6</sup> It became a famous slogan among the supporters of the ISIS. To them, it conveys the message that ISIS, despite the losses or setbacks, will grow as an Islāmic State. This reflects their ideology of resilience and persistence over time.

It is interesting to realize that out of the word *baqiya* comes the noun *al-Baqā'*, meaning “Eternal,” “one of the Ninety-Nine Names of God.” It “refers to the Divine Attribute of Everlastingness or Continuance.”<sup>7</sup> *Al-Baqā'* means being “without end, and eternal in the future.”<sup>8</sup> The concept of eternity, in relation to God, means that His existence has no end, no conclusion, and no possibility of ceasing. It is inconceivable that Allāh would perish or cease to exist. Rather, He is eternal, and nothing will ever overtake Him. The idea of being “eternal” is a unique attribute of Allāh, shared by no one. Every created being, no matter how long it exists, is subject to eventual non-existence and an end. “All things perish, except His [Allah] Face” (*Sūrah* 28:88). This reminds us of the biblical teaching that God “alone has immortality” (1 Tim 6:16).

The German scholar of Islāmic studies and Middle Eastern literature, Ulrich Marzolph, in *101 Middle Eastern Tales and Their Impact on Western Oral*

<sup>4</sup> David H. Ucko, *The Insurgent's Dilemma: A Struggle to Prevail* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Ahmed Hashim, *The Caliphate at War: Operational Realities and Innovations of the Islamic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 293.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Smith and Joseph Franco, “Mujahideen in Marawi: How Local Jihadism in the Philippines Tried to Go Global,” in *Exporting Global Jihad: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Tom Smith and Kirsten E. Schulze (London: Tauris, 2020), 2:46.

<sup>7</sup> John Baldock, *The Essence of Sufism* (London: Arcturus, 2005), 254.

<sup>8</sup> Carlos Madrigal, *Explaining the Trinity to Muslims: A Personal Reflection on the Biblical Teaching in Light of the Theological Criteria of Islam* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 2011), 243. There are other As-Sifat adh-Dhatiyya (i.e., “intrinsic attributes of the divinity”) of Allāh, such as *al-Qidam*, being without beginning, and eternal in the past; *al-Wahdaniyya*, having no partner or match; *al-Mukhalafatu li'l-hawadith*, being dissimilar to every creature in every respect; *al-Qiyamu bi nafsihī*, self-existence or not needing anything for his existence” (Madrigal, *Explaining the Trinity*, 243). It should be noted that none of the aforementioned attributes belongs to man, they belong to Allah exclusively.

*Tradition*,<sup>9</sup> explains the Arabic word *baqiya* ("remnant") from an old Arabic perspective. He illustrates *baqiya* through a story of mice holding a council to discuss how to protect themselves from a cat. They all agree that fastening a bell (*juljul*) around the cat's neck is an excellent idea, but no one can answer the question: Who will perform the act? Finally, one of the mice utters a phrase that becomes a proverb in Arabic, *baqiya shadduhu* (بَقِيَ شَدُّهُ)—"The act of fastening remains" or "The most difficult part remains."<sup>10</sup> Most scholars, including Marzolph, favor the second interpretation of *baqiya*, meaning "the most difficult part remains." Marzolph, in particular, offers *baqiya shadduhu* as the most fitting and appropriate alternative.

And so, the expression *baqiya shadduhu* (بَقِيَ شَدُّهُ) provides valuable insights into the notion of the remnant, as: "endurance through hardships," "challenge of preservation," "focus on what truly matters," and "hope and continuation."

### 3. The Qur'an and *Baqiya*

We will examine several occurrences of this word, analyzing each in its context and implications. We will focus particularly on six instances of the word *baqiya* found in the following *Sūwar* (plural of *Sūrah*): 2:248, 278; 11:86, 116; 53:51; and 55:27. First, I would like to provide a brief overview of the concept of the remnant as it is understood apart from its eschatological or end-time dimension, namely in the historical sense (*Sūwar* 2:248, 278; 53:51).

#### 3.1 *Sūrah* 2:248

*Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, the longest chapter of the Qur'an from the Madinan period,<sup>11</sup> is named after the story about the children of Israel worshipping the

<sup>9</sup> Ulrich Marzolph, *101 Middle Eastern Tales and Their Impact on Western Oral Tradition* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2020), 82.

<sup>10</sup> The Arabic word *shadd* (شَدَّ) can mean both "to fasten" (*shadda*, شَدَّة) and "something difficult" (*shaded*, شَدِيد).

<sup>11</sup> Khurram Murad, *Key to al-Baqarah: The Longest Surah of the Qur'an* (London: Kube, 2014), 7. The revelations of the Qur'an were given incrementally and divided into two sections, namely, the Meccan and the Madinan *Sūwar*. The Meccan Qur'an is what was revealed before the *Hijrah* (the migration of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers took from Mecca to Medina) of the Prophet, the Madinan ones is what was revealed after the *Hijrah*. The difference between the two divisions is a historical fact, the Meccan deals with the fundamentals of the religion, such as individual worship, "abolition of slavery, and the insistence on purely peaceful means for spreading Islam," general ethical issues, and the comparison between the present life and the hereafter (Stefan

cow (see Exod 32). This narrative emphasizes the importance of promptly obeying Allah's commandments, illustrating how hesitation and disobedience can lead to negative consequences.<sup>12</sup>

*Context:* *Sūrah* 2:248 appears in the context of the children of Israel during the time of the prophet Samuel and concerns the divine appointment of *Ṭālūt* (King Saul)<sup>13</sup> as their leader. According to 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, this appointment emphasizes two essential qualities of kingship: wisdom to discern what benefits the people and strength to carry out what is right.<sup>14</sup>

The *al-Tābūt* ("Ark of the Covenant") was a sacred chest described as a "chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 5ft. × 3ft. × 3ft."<sup>15</sup> It preserved the "Testimony of Allāh," including "The Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Mūsā and Hārūn," and served to reassure the children of Israel and confirm Saul's divinely appointed leadership.<sup>16</sup> The role of the "remnant" refers to the sacred relics left from

Wild, "We have Sent Down to Thee the Book with the Truth: Spatial and Temporal Implications of the Qur'anic Concepts of Nuzūl, Tanzīl, and 'Inzāl," in *Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science Texts and Studies*, ed. Stefan Wild (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 150). As for the Medinan *Sūwar*, they deal with social and political issues, debates between Christians and Muslims, and legal matters. There are approximately 85 Meccan *Sūwar*, while the Medinan *Sūwar* number around 29.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik, *Al-Qur'an, the Guidance for Mankind* (Houston, TX: The Institute of Islamic Knowledge, 1997), 106.

<sup>13</sup> The name *Ṭālūt* derives from Hebrew and is considered synonymous with Saul. The name *Ṭālūt* comes from the Arabic root *ṭāla* (طال), meaning "became tall or high," which corresponds with the description given in 1 Sam 9:2. For further discussions, see Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Masroor Aḥmad, *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (London: Islam International, 1988), 1:393–94.

<sup>14</sup> 'Allāmah al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥussain al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Al-Mizān: An Exegesis of the Qur'an*, trans. 'Allāmah Sayyid Sa'īd Akhtār Rizvī (Sydney: Tawheed Institute Australia, 2020), 4:83. The Israelites had requested a king to lead them into battle, and Allāh granted them Saul, despite their initial objections. As a sign of Saul's legitimacy, Allāh promised that the *al-Tābūt* ("Ark of the Covenant"), containing the *al-Sakīnah* ("tranquility") and *wabaqīyyatum* ("remnants") left by the families of Moses and Aaron, would return to them, carried by angels.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Taqī-ud-Dīn Al-Hilālī and Muhammad Muhsin Khān, eds., *The Holy Quran: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, Saudi Arabia: King Fahd, 1999), 110.

<sup>16</sup> Maulana Mohammad Razi Khan Afridi, "Quran: Historical Aspects," in *Encyclopaedia of Quranic Studies* (New Delhi: Anmol, 2006), 165. See also, Ted Byfield and Paul Stanway, *The Sword of Islam: A.D. 565 to 740: The Muslim Onslaught All but Destroys Christendom* (Worcester, PA: Christian History Project, 2004), 68.

the family of Moses and Aaron preserved in the Ark. This remnant functioned as a sign from God, assuring the Israelites of divine presence, continuity with past deliverance, and the legitimacy of Saul's leadership.

From these points, a single conclusion emerges: first, the term *sakīnatun* (سَكِينَةٌ),<sup>17</sup> meaning "tranquility" (cf. 9:26, 40; 48:4, 18, 26);<sup>18</sup> second, the "remnant" refers to elements preserved within the Ark. Third, the nominative case of *baqiya* emphasizes the subject of the phrase, highlighting the importance of the "remnant" and the "tranquility" as significant signs for the people.

*Sūrah* 2:248 presents the idea of the remnant as "used in the sense of legacy of good left behind."<sup>19</sup> It refers to the sacred relics of earlier prophets—associated with the Ark of the Covenant—brought by angels as a divine sign to confirm Tālūt's kingship and to strengthen Israel's faith.<sup>20</sup> This remnant

<sup>17</sup> Gordon D. Nickel wrote: "The Arabic word *Sakīna* may bring to mind the late Hebrew *shekhinā* (found in the Jewish Talmud, not the Bible). The Hebrew term refers to the presence of God in the tabernacle and is thought by some scholars to express the concept of "glory" (Heb. *kabōd*) in Exod 40:34–35. In the Qur'an, all six occurrences of *Sakīna* appear in battle contexts [cf. *Sūwar* 9:26, 40; 48:4, 18, 26]" (Gordon D. Nickel, *The Quran with Christian Commentary: A Guide to Understanding the Scripture of Islam*, trans. A. J. Droge [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020], 71).

<sup>18</sup> Masood Ahmed Ranginwala, *Essentials of Quranic Arabic, Second Edition* (Jamaica, NY: Islamic Learning Foundation, 2013), 1:23–26.

<sup>19</sup> 'Omar, *Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an*, 60. For further discussions, see Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Masroor Ahmad, *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (London: Islam International, 1988), 1:393–94.

<sup>20</sup> Mahmoud Ali Alerag and Mehmet Austay, "Islamic Accounting Applications of Islamic Finance," in *Islamic Accounting and Finance: A Handbook*, ed. Khaled Hussainey and Hidayat Al Lawati (Toh Tuck Link, Singapore: World Scientific, 2023), 6. While the general understanding of *ribā* refers to an excessively high rate of interest in Islāmic law, it extends to include any form of interest, making the term challenging to translate precisely. The prohibition is based on the exploitation and injustice associated with *ribā*, emphasizing the importance of fairness in financial transactions. The Iranian Islāmic scholar Nasr writes: "Not all interest is *ribā*, and moreover not all *ribā* is interest. *Ribā* simply means 'increase,' 'gain,' or 'growth'" (Nasr, *The Study Quran*, 286). From the Qur'an and *Aḥādīth*, *ribā* arises in two different forms, namely, *ribā al-Nasī'ah* "growth through deferment" and *ribā al-Faḍl* "growth through surplus" (Basheer A. Oshodi, *An Integral Approach to Development Economics: Islamic Finance in an African Context* [New York: Routledge, 2016], 103). The former refers to unlawful profit obtained through deferment, often seen as interest on a loan. The latter pertains to illicit gain acquired by exchanging goods of the same type and kind in unequal quantities, which is prohibited in trading. A *Hādīth* states: "Gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates, and salt for salt; like for like, hand to hand, in equal amounts; and any increase is *ribā*" (Munawar Iqbal and Philip Molyneux,

symbolizes the spiritual and moral heritage of Mūsā and Hārūn, emphasizing character and righteousness rather than material possessions.

### 3.2 *Sūrah* 2:278

*Sūrah* 2:275–81 discuss the concept of *ribā* (رِبَا), commonly translated as “usury.” This concept is significant because *riba* is connected to *baqiya*, where the remnant is acquired not through illicit gain, but by obeying Allāh and retaining only what rightfully remains after renouncing usury.

In verse 278 of *Sūrat Al-Baqarah*, the word *baqiya* (بَقِيَّة) means what “remains” or is left over, referring specifically to any remaining amount of *ribā* (usury).<sup>21</sup> The verse commands believers to abandon not only major forms of usury but even residual or seemingly minor amounts, emphasizing that all traces of *ribā* must be eliminated because they contradict the principles of faith.<sup>22</sup>

This passage highlights the believer’s responsibility to carefully adhere to Islāmic financial ethics by completely abandoning *ribā*. The use of *baqiya* (بَقِيَّة) emphasizes total moral compliance, teaching that even the smallest remaining trace of unjust gain must be rejected.<sup>23</sup> In an eschatological sense, it also points to accountability on the Day of Judgment, when every action—even what seems insignificant—will be examined, calling believers to pursue full integrity and purity in their deeds.

*Thirty Years of Islamic Banking: History, Performance and Prospects* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016], 8).

<sup>21</sup> Amr Osman, “The Qur’an and the Hadith as Sources of Islamic Law,” in *Routledge Handbook of Islamic Law*, ed. Khaled Abou El Fadl, Ahmad Atif Ahmad, and Said Fares Hassan (New York: Routledge, 2019), 127–40.

<sup>22</sup> Sarah R. bin Tyeer, *The Qur’an and the Aesthetics of Premodern Arabic Prose* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 87–88.

<sup>23</sup> The theological foundation of this verse aligns with what is known as a “moral and eschatological guidepost,” emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior as *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* approaches. Moral or ethical eschatology stresses “the importance of faith, the dangers of following desires, and the need for moral integrity in times of trial” (Edward D. Andrews, *Islamic Eschatology: Awaiting al-Mahdi—The Twelfth Imam and the Future of Islam* [Cambridge, OH: Christian Publishing House, 2023], 46). The eschatological implications, such as abandoning *ribā* (usury), are vital in preparing for divine judgment and maintaining spiritual purity.

### 3.3 *Sūrah* 53:51

*Sūrat al-Najm* ("The Star") is an early Meccan *Sūrah*, named after the opening oath "By the Star." It is known for its powerful poetic style and its strong affirmation that divine revelation is real and authoritative, not illusion. The *Sūrah* recounts earlier nations to reinforce the certainty of revelation and divine judgment.<sup>24</sup>

*Context:* Within its concluding sections, the *Sūrah* recalls the fate of past peoples, including Thamūd, who rejected the prophet Šālīḥ despite clear warnings. Their advanced civilization and arrogance led to their destruction, serving as a moral lesson for the Quraysh and all later audiences.<sup>25</sup> These narratives function as realized eschatology—past judgments meant to warn those still living.

In *Sūrah* 53:51 ("And Thamūd—He left no remnant"), the root *baqiya* ("to remain") is used negatively to stress total annihilation after disbelief. "Remnant" here underscores that no trace of the unbelieving community endured, while implicitly affirming that those who followed the prophets were preserved.<sup>26</sup> The term thus highlights divine justice: complete destruction for persistent rejection and preservation for the righteous.

With this general survey of the use of *baqiya* in *Sūwar* 2:248, 278 and 53:51, we now turn to *Sūwar* 11:86, 116, and 55:27, containing reflections related more directly to the idea of an eschatological remnant people.

### 3.4 *Sūrah* 11:86 and 116

*Sūrat Hūd* is one of the six *Sūwar* that open with the letters *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Rā'*.<sup>27</sup> This *Sūrah* belongs to the Meccan *Sūwar*,<sup>28</sup> with the exception that

<sup>24</sup> Iftekhar Ahmed Shams, *The Secret of The Holy Quran: A Complete Guide, Mercy, and Miracles for the Whole Mankind Irrespective of Religion* (London: Islam International, 2003), 74.

<sup>25</sup> Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'an Translation: Discourse, Texture, and Exegesis* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 143. According to Nasr, 'Ād the former (v. 50) is understood as a reference to Iram, the tribe of Noah's grandson by the same name (see 89:7–8), while 'Ād the latter was simply referred to as 'Ād. For the account of the tribe of 'Ād, see 7:65–72; 11:50–60; 41:15–16; 54:18–21. For the account of the tribe of Thamūd, see 7:73–79; 11:61–68; 26:141–58; 54:23–31 (Nasr, *The Study Quran*, 2887).

<sup>26</sup> David Pinault, *The Shiites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 21.

<sup>27</sup> There are about 5 *Sūwar* in the Qur'ān that begins with *Alif*, *Lām*, and *Rā'*. These are *Sūwar* 10–12, and 14–15.

<sup>28</sup> Hakki Yılmaz, *Division by Division English Interpretation of the Qur'ān in the Order of*

verses 12, 17, and 114 most likely belong to the Medinan period.<sup>29</sup> The *Sūrah* admonished the Meccan people to forsake their idolatrous worship and rather focus on worshipping the true Allāh (cf. v. 2). The name Hūd means “guidance” or “to guide.” In the context of the Qur’ānic narrative, it signifies his role as a prophet guiding His people toward the worship of one God and away from idolatry.<sup>30</sup>

*Context:* *Sūrah* 11 was revealed during a time when the early Muslim community faced significant opposition and persecution in Mecca. The *Sūrah* addresses the struggles of past prophets, such as Noah (vv. 25–48), Hūd (vv. 50–60), Šāliḥ (vv. 61–68), Ibrāhīm (vv. 69–76), Lot (vv. 77–83), Shu‘ayb (vv. 84–95), and Moses (vv. 96–99). By listing other prophets, this *Sūrah* offers encouragement and reassurance to the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers. By recounting the stories of earlier prophets and their challenges, it emphasizes the importance of perseverance in faith and the consequences of denying God’s message. The historical context reflects the need for hope and guidance amid adversity.

The context of 11:86 relates to the story of prophet Shu‘ayb, an Arabian prophet identified in Islāmic *Kalām* with the biblical figure Jethro, Moses’s father-in-law. Brannon M. Wheeler, in his book *Moses in the Qur’an and Islamic Exegesis*, said:

When Moses wanted to depart from Shu‘ayb, he ordered his wife to ask her father to give her some sheep off which to live. So he gave her his sheep that would be born in that year not of one color. He said: When a sheep passed, Moses would strike its side with the rod. All the sheep gave birth to offspring not of one color. Each sheep gave birth to two and

*Revelation* (London: Islam International, 2020), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Sahal A. Mohamed, *The Numerical and Time Correlations in the Quran* (Victoria, Canada: FriesenPress, 2018), 52. For instance, if one adds the verse number 13 to the chapter position 11 in *Sūrah Hūd*, the sum equals 24, highlighting an interesting numerical observation. From a Šūfī perspective, such patterns in the Qur’ān, like the repeated use of the number seven, symbolize spiritual perfection and cosmic harmony. These numbers often carry deeper mystical meanings, linking ritual, cosmology, and the relationship between the material and metaphysical worlds. For further discussion, see Sachal Smith, *Esoteric Islam: A Hermetic Perspective on Islamic Traditions* (London: Islam International, 2021), 131–34.

<sup>30</sup> Hūd is a prophet mentioned in the Qur’ān who preached to the people of ‘Ad in Arabia. His message called them to abandon idolatry and corruption and focus on worshipping God. Despite his warnings, the people rejected his message. *Sūrat Hūd* is named after him. For more discussion, see Saniyasnain Khan, *The Story of the Prophet Hud* (London: Goodword Books, 2005).

three young. None among them had overly large or overly narrow milk-producing capacities, nor to short or too long of teats.<sup>31</sup>

While the above quotation is not directly from the Qur'an, it is often associated with Islāmic *Kalām*. Prophet Shu'ayb was sent to guide the people of Midian, who lived in northwestern Arabia.

Table 4. Arabic Text and English Translation *Sūrah 11:86*

Arabic	English
بَقِيَّتُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ	God's remainder is better for you, if you are believers. And I am not a guardian over you (Arberry translation).

In verse 86, *baqiyyatu l-lāh* ("God's remainder") is presented as what is "better for you" if you are believers, emphasizing that enduring blessing belongs to the faithful. The verse teaches that honest gain aligned with God's guidance is superior to unjust wealth, and that the true remnant consists of those who freely choose faith and integrity, not those compelled by authority.

What is of interest in the above verse is the use of the *baqiyyatu*, meaning "remnant." Concerning the word *baqiyyatu*, Islāmic scholar Nasr said:

The remnant from God renders *baqiyyat* Allāh; *baqiyyah* literally means "remainder" or "that which remains." The wealth that is obtained through honest commercial practices and given by God is better than the gains acquired through fraudulent ones, the remnant being what is "left" after one observes fully the measure and the balance with justice and abstains from what is illicit. Alternately, it can refer to the reward that is with God or His Contentment, which is greater than what is gained through the act of defrauding since it remains and abides in the Hereafter.<sup>32</sup>

In *Sūrah 11:86*, *baqiyyatu* refers to what is lawful and preserved by God, teaching that what God leaves for believers is better and more lasting than gains acquired unjustly. In Islāmic eschatology — especially within Shi'a theology — the phrase *baqiyyatu l-lāh* is also associated with the awaited *Mahdi* ("Guided One" is a messianic figure in Islāmic eschatology) as the final di-

<sup>31</sup> Brannon M. Wheeler, *Moses in the Qur'an and Islamic Exegesis* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 52.

<sup>32</sup> Nasr, *The Study Quran*, 1277.

vinely guided “remnant.”<sup>33</sup> Within the broader context of *Sūrah* 11, references to a faithful remnant<sup>34</sup> served to encourage early Muslims facing opposition by reminding them that God preserves and sustains those who remain loyal to His guidance.<sup>35</sup>

Table 4. Arabic Text and English Translation of *Sūrah* 11:116

Arabic	English
<p>فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أُولُو بَقِيَّةٍ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّنْ أَنْجَيْنَا وَاتَّبَعِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا مُنِّهُم أَتْرَفُوا فِيهِ وَكَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ</p>	<p>Or if there had been, of the generations before you, men of a remainder forbidding corruption in the earth—except a few of those whom We delivered of them; but the evildoers followed the ease they were given to exult in and became sinners or guilty.<sup>36</sup></p>

The main subject of the verse is *ulū baqiyyatin* (أُولُو بَقِيَّةٍ), meaning “men of a remainder” or “persons possessed of understanding and discrimination.” They refer to individuals who possess excellence or retain a remnant of judgment and intelligence.<sup>37</sup> It also signifies those who have the qualities of vigilance and observation, and, therefore, the ability to guard and preserve.

As for the Arabic word *ut’rifū* (“luxury they were given”), derives from the verbal root (ت-ر-ف, T-R-F), which generally conveys meanings related to “luxury, opulence, affluence,”<sup>38</sup> indulgence, or excessive ease and comfort. In the context of the Qur’ān, it often refers to those who have been granted excessive wealth and comfort, leading them to moral corruption or negligence of their duties toward God. The form *ut’rifū* (أُتْرَفُوا) is in the passive voice, meaning “they were indulged” or “they were given luxury.” This im-

<sup>33</sup> Scott Peterson, *Let the Swords Encircle Me: Iran—A Journey Behind the Headlines* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 298.

<sup>34</sup> Shīrāzī initially introduced himself as the *Bāb*, the gate to the Promised Mahdi. Later, he claimed to be the Mahdi himself. Eventually, he declared himself the Prophet of a New Age, and finally, as the essence of God and his being. For further discussion, see Masoud Basiti, Zahra Moradi, and Hossein Alhoondali, *Twelve Principles: A Comprehensive Investigation on the Baha’i Teachings*, trans. Hossein Alhoondali and Ali Mansouri (Tehran: Bahar Afshan, 2014), 7.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Ali al-Hamid Ishraq Khawari, *Talkhis Tarikh Nabil* [Abridged History of Nabil] (New Delhi: Mu’assisiyyi Chap Wa Intisharat Mir’at, 1991), 122.

<sup>36</sup> The translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>37</sup> Edward E. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), s.v. “أُتْرَفَ.”

<sup>38</sup> Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 93.

plies that the people mentioned were led astray due to the ease and excessive comfort they enjoyed.

In verse 116, Allāh “intends to produce wonder and amazement in the Prophet that in past communities there were only a few who were righteous while the rest were disbelievers who deserved punishment.”<sup>39</sup> The word *baqiyyatin* (“remnant”), as a genitive noun, plays a crucial role because it emphasizes that, despite being a small group, they are individuals of moral caliber who stand for what is right and are capable of preventing corruption. The presence of these individuals is vital in preserving the spiritual and moral fabric of the society in which they live. In the words of ‘Abdul Mannān ‘Omar, the word *baqiyyatin* (“remnant”) in *Sūrah* 11:116 “is used in the sense of those possessing excellence and sound judgment, intelligence and piety.”<sup>40</sup>

In Islāmic *al-Ma‘ād*, *baqiyyatin* signifies spiritual preservation, referring to a small, faithful remnant that upholds righteousness amid widespread moral corruption. Though few in number (*illā qalīlan*), this group stands in contrast to the indulgent majority, described as *muj‘rimīna* (“criminals”), and plays a vital role in preserving moral and spiritual values—an end-time theme echoed across religious traditions.

### 3.6 *Sūrah* 55:27

*Sūrah* 55 is known as *Sūrat al-Rahmān* (“The Compassionate”), which is an early Meccan *Sūrah*. Its name is derived from the first word mentioned, *al-Rahmān*, a divine name of Allāh, meaning “the Compassionate.” To many Muslims, *Sūrat al-Rahmān* is known as the ‘*Arūs al-Qur‘ān*’ (“The Bride of the Qur‘ān”).<sup>41</sup> This title was given for several reasons: first, for its poetic beauty; and second, for its profound themes. Finally, it reflects a deep admiration that Muslim believers have because it includes accountability, creation, and divine mercy. *Sūrat al-Rahmān*, along with other *Sūwar* in the Qur‘ān, emphasizes the profound concept of *revelation* as one of the greatest favors Allāh bestows upon humanity. This *Sūrah* is distinctive for its rhythmic refrain, repeated about 31 times: “which is it, of the favours of your Lord, that ye deny?” (55:13).

The act of revealing divine guidance through scriptures and prophets is

<sup>39</sup> Nasr, *The Study Quran*, 1409.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Omar, *Dictionary of the Holy Qur‘ān*, 60.

<sup>41</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 221.

viewed as an essential mercy, providing a clear path to righteousness and salvation. It highlights Allāh’s compassion by ensuring that humanity is not left without direction, and stresses the importance of following divine wisdom. This idea is intertwined with other blessings mentioned in the *Sūrah*, all of which serve as reminders of Allāh’s grace and generosity towards His creation. This *Sūrah* highlights the concept of Allāh’s creation in pairs, such as “sun and moon” (v. 3), “saltwater and freshwater” (v. 19), “mankind and jinn [supernatural beings]” (vv. 31, and 319), and “life and death” (v. 26), emphasizing balance and harmony in all things. While every part of creation benefits from His favors, all will eventually perish, with only Allāh enduring through eternity.<sup>42</sup>

Table 6. Arabic Text and English Translation of *Sūrah* 55:27

Arabic	English
وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ	But will remain the face of your Lord, Full of Majesty and Splendor.

The above verse conveys the notion that the face of Allāh will endure, with the literal translation being, or: “The face of your Lord will endure forever.” Ibn Sina, for instance, interpreted this verse metaphorically, suggesting that Allāh’s face cannot be physically seen. This metaphorical explanation allows humans, with their limited perception and understanding, to grasp the essence of the divine. Therefore, any attempt to conceptualize an image of Allāh must be approached through the lens of metaphor.<sup>43</sup>

The word *yabqāʾ* (يَبْقَىٰ) derives from the root *Bā-Qāf-Yā* (ب ق ي), the same as *baqiya*, which means “to remain” or “to continue.”<sup>44</sup> ‘Omar stated that the term *yabqāʾ* signifies “lasts permanently” or “will last permanently.”<sup>45</sup> The Arabs would say, *Kullu shayʾin hālikun illā wajhahu* (كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ), meaning “everything will perish except that which is under the care and the protection of Allāh.” *Sūrah* 55:27 has been a subject of many interpretations among the mainstream of Islām: philosophers, Shīʿites, Sunnī, and *Ṣūfī Tarīqa* (order).

<sup>42</sup> Al-Hilālī and Khān, *The Holy Quran*, 1659.

<sup>43</sup> Erich Kolig, *Conservative Islam: A Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), 268.

<sup>44</sup> Hussam S. Timani, “Al-Fana’ in Ibn ‘Arabi’s and Eckhart’s Thoughts: The Annihilation of the Many in the One,” in *Mystical Traditions: Approaches to Peaceful Coexistence*, ed. Muhammad Shafiq and Thomas Donlin-Smith (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 208.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Omar, *Dictionary of the Holy Qurʾān*, 60.

From a philosophical (فلسفي) point of view, the verse is understood to mean that Allāh is above His creation and is therefore present everywhere. He transcends everything; He is omnipresent. From a Shī'ite perspective, the verse is understood to mean that Allāh's *Wajh* ("face") is seen in the Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and the Imāms. As for the Sunnī *Mutakallim* (مُتَكَلِّم, meaning "theologian"), Allāh's *Wajh* is understood metaphorically as His awareness and knowledge. It is an anthropomorphic expression indicating that God is attentive and watching over humanity, not a physical description. For *Ṣūfī Tarīqa*, Allāh's face cannot be fully seen until they finally die.<sup>46</sup> Regardless of one's theological stance, the central idea remains that Allāh's face will endure forever and ever. The *face* of Allāh is possessed of majesty and bounty.

The verse uses the phrase "the face of your Lord" rather than "your God," a concept similarly found in other *Sūwar*, such as 2:115, 272; 30:38; and 76:9. From a Qur'anic perspective, the term "your Lord" conveys a sense of closeness and personal care, which is more intimate than the more general reference to "your Allāh (God)." The phrase "your Lord" is closer to the theme of blessings and bounty that permeates this *Sūrah*.

In Islāmic eschatology, the word *yabqā* (يَبْقَى), meaning "to endure" or "to remain," stresses the eternal nature of Allāh. Everything in creation is transient and will come to an end, except for Allāh. The concept that everything perishes while Allāh's name and attributes endure is called "ontological eschatology," which holds that the universe will ultimately be destroyed, with Allāh alone remaining eternal.<sup>47</sup> The concept of *yabqā* functions as a reminder of Allāh's permanence, encouraging Muslim believers to reflect on their relationship with Allāh's immutable and eternal nature.

#### 4. Ṣūfīm and Baqiya

In the field of *Ṣūfism* (التَّصَوُّف, *al-Taṣawwuf*), the verb *baqa* derives from the verb *baqiya*, which means to survive. *Baqa* is the state that occurs after *fana*

<sup>46</sup> Ida Glaser and Hannah Kay, *Thinking Biblically about Islam: Genesis, Transfiguration* (Cumbria, CA: Langham Global, 2016), 130–32.

<sup>47</sup> Concerning the study of "ontological eschatology" as common in philosophical thought, see Christophe Chalamet, "Redemption of This World—Reflections on Eschatology in Light of Barth's Dogmatic Lectures in Munster (1925–1926)," in *Finality of the Gospel: Karl Barth and the Tasks of Eschatology*, ed. Kaitlyn Dugan and Philip G. Ziegler (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 143–57. See also, Zeki Saritoprak, *Islam's Jesus* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2020), 55.

[annihilation]."<sup>48</sup> Generally speaking, the word *baqa* is often translated as “a state of rest with Allāh.” When it relates to the word *baqiya*, it means “to survive.”

In the volume, *The Sufi Book of Life: 99 Pathways of the Heart for the Modern Dervish*, Neil Douglas-Klotz explains the root *baqa* as follows:

The roots show something that creates and lives after everything else has drained away. We could see this as the image of a desert landscape in which an oasis remains. The Qur’an uses this word in the passage mentioned under *Dhul-Jelal-Wal-Ikram* [ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ], *Dhū al-Jalāli wa-al-’Ikrām*: “Everything passes away except for the Sustainer’s face, full of power and bounty.”<sup>49</sup>

This passage explains the meaning of the root letters in the Arabic word *baqiya* as it is used in the Qur’ān. The roots represent the idea of something that continues to create and sustain life after everything else has disappeared or faded away. The imagery is compared to a desert, where an oasis—something that provides life and sustenance—remains even when the surrounding land is barren. This metaphor is tied to the Qur’ānic reference under the title *Dhū al-Jalāli wa-al-’Ikrām* (The Possessor of Majesty and Honor); highlighting Allāh’s eternal nature and His ability to sustain life even in desolation.

From a *Ṣūfī* perspective, life is to let go of everything that can be associated with the “I.” Irina Tweedie said:

The spiritual life of every one of us is the drama of the soul. It’s the crucifixion and the resurrection. What is crucified, of course, is the ego. The resurrection is—I hesitate to say—enlightenment, perhaps. But enlightenment of what or whom? Once you merge into oneness, there is no such thing as “I.” So who is there to be enlightened?<sup>50</sup>

In *Ṣūfī* thought, the idea of “I” represents the “ego,” known in Arabic as *nafs*. At times, “I” or *nafs* is the cause of the separation between the human and the divine. In the path of enlightenment, “I” is seen as a barrier between the divine and one’s worldly desires, such as pride, lust, materialism, and a

<sup>48</sup> Sophia R. Arjana, “Fana and Baqa (Annihilation and Resting with Allah),” in *Islam: A Worldwide Encyclopedia*, ed. Cenap Çakmak (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1:442.

<sup>49</sup> Neil Douglas-Klotz, *The Sufi Book of Life: 99 Pathways of the Heart for the Modern Dervish* (London: Penguin, 2005), 257.

<sup>50</sup> See the interview with Irina Tweedie in “Both Feet Firmly on the Ground: An Interview with Irina Tweedie,” *Laughing Man Magazine* 12.4 (1987): 16.

sense of individualism. The process of overcoming the *nafs* or “ego” is likened to the crucifixion, a painful but very crucial death of the self. This is known as *Jihād al-nafs*, “the Greater Jihād.”<sup>51</sup> This crucifixion symbolizes *fanā*’ (“annihilation”) of the *nafs*, where persons let go of the attachment to their own identity and the material things of this world.

For a *Ṣūfī*, the concept of resurrection has two phases: the negative and the actual. The former takes place when a person passes to a higher sphere of existence. A *Ḥādīth* admonishes an individual to “die before you die” or “die before death.”<sup>52</sup> The concept is to let one’s “false—self die away while” he/she is “still alive.”<sup>53</sup> This is the death of the *nafs*. The latter, the actual resurrection, focuses on the “enlightenment” or the “spiritual awakening.” The soul unites with the divine in achieving oneness with Allāh. The analogy of the crucifixion and resurrection reflects two stages, namely, *fanā*’ (“annihilation”) and *baqa* (“resting with Allāh”), where *baqa* is associated with the word *baqiya*, meaning “to remain” or “to survive.”

It is worth mentioning that the idea of *fanā*’ and *baqa* is found only once in the Qur’ān, where the created world is described as transient and perishing (*fānin*), while only the face of Allāh remains eternal (*wayabqā*). The Qur’ān states: “All that dwells upon the earth is perishing [فَانٍ, *fānini*], yet still abides [وَيَبْقَى, *wayabqā*] the Face of thy Lord, majestic, splendid” (*Sūrah* 55:26–27, Arthur Arberry translation).<sup>54</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1207–1273), or simply Rūmī, was a 13th-century poet, Hanafi *Faqīh* (an expert jurist or scholar specializing in Islāmic law within the Hanafi school of thought [*madhhab*]), and a *Ṣūfī* mystic, who described the words *fanā*’ and *baqa* as a union between the divine and the human. These two terms are related to the idea of *Shahāda*<sup>55</sup> (“Profession of Faith”), *La ilaaha illa Allāh* (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ), which literally reads “No God but The God.”<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Yafia Katherine Randall, *Sufism and Jewish-Muslim Relations: The Derekh Avraham Order in Israel* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 127.

<sup>52</sup> Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Sufi Message: Spiritual Liberty* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009), 5:220.

<sup>53</sup> Ian Watson, *The Homeopathic Miasms: A Modern View* (London: Cutting Edge, 2009), 59.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted: A Translation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 252.

<sup>55</sup> William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005), 71.

<sup>56</sup> Youssry Guirguis, *Islām in Focus: History, Doctrine, & Philosophy* (Saraburi, Thailand: Institute Press, 2024), 39, 271.

## 5. Characteristics of *Baqiya* in the Qur'ān

The table below outlines the fundamental characteristics of the word *baqiya* and its derivatives as found in the six *Sūwar* we have examined: 2:248, 278; 11:86, 116; 53:51; and 55:27. Each entry highlights how the term encapsulates distinct theological and eschatological themes, illustrating the nuanced meanings and implications associated with the concept of permanence and continuity in the Islāmic *Kalām* and context. By exploring these characteristics, we gain insight into the moral, spiritual, and cosmic dimensions of the Arabic word *baqiya* (“remnant”) as it relates to divine guidance, human conduct, and the ultimate fate of creation.

Table 7: *Characteristics of the Remnant*

Sūrah	Word	Meaning	Characteristic
2:248	<i>Baqiy-yatun</i>	Legacy left behind/preservation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refers to the remnant left behind by the families of Mūsā (Moses) and Hārūn (Aaron). Belongs to the historical remnant. It also highlights divine legacy and divine blessings.</li> <li>2. The presence of the remnants in the <i>al-Tābūt</i> (Ark of the Covenant) signifies Allāh's favor and serves as a reassurance for the people, highlighting their moral heritage.</li> </ol>
2:278	<i>Baqiya</i>	Remnant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describes abandoning the remainder of usurious gains (<i>ribā</i>), emphasizing a command to leave unethical practices.</li> <li>2. Carries eschatological implications by stressing the need for moral purity in preparation for divine judgment.</li> </ol>
11:86	<i>Baqiy-yatu</i>	Remainder/Remnant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Superiority of what is left by Allāh, where the words <i>baqiyyat Allāh</i> (بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ) refer to what is lawful and blessed by Him, which is better than ill-gotten gains.</li> <li>2. It encourages faithful conduct of believers at the end of time.</li> </ol>

11:116	<i>Baqiy-yatun</i>	Remnant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refers to a small group of morally upright people <i>ulū baqiyyatin</i> (أُولُو بَقِيَّةٍ) who could have stopped corruption.</li> <li>2. Preserving moral order. The verse focuses on their role as preservers of integrity, acting as a moral compass in a corrupt society.</li> </ol>
53:51	<i>Abqā</i>	Left no remnant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The phrase <i>fa-mā abqā</i> (فَمَا أَبْقَى), meaning nothing was spared of the Thamūd people, signifying the completeness of divine punishment.</li> <li>2. It denotes a finality of judgment, and it reflects the idea of realized eschatology, where divine judgment leads to absolute destruction.</li> </ol>
55:27	<i>Yabqā</i>	Lasts permanently	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allāh's face <i>yabqā</i> (يَبْقَى), will last forever and ever, demonstrating His eternal nature.</li> <li>2. Contrasting mortality, where the transient nature of everything else in creation, which perishes, is in contrast with Allāh who alone remains eternal.</li> </ol>

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## 6. Summary

This article has explored the concept of the Arabic Qur'ānic word *baqiya* and its derivatives through six different *Sūwar*: 2:248, 278; 11:86, 116; 53:51; and 55:27. Fundamentally, regardless of its conjugation, the word consistently conveys the meaning of “remnant.”

Together, the following *Sūwar* (2:248; 278; and 53:51) presents *baqiya* as a historically grounded concept that emphasizes continuity, moral accountability, and divine judgment within lived history.

In *Sūrah* 2:248, *baqiya* refers to the sacred legacy of Mūsā and Hārūn, symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant, highlighting spiritual continuity preserved by Allāh's grace rather than material power. Within the framework of Islāmic eschatology, it highlights the idea of a spiritual heritage—that divine favor and preservation come through Allāh's grace rather than material power or wealth. This may be viewed as a form of “historical es-

chatological remnant," reflecting how Allāh's guidance and faithfulness continue through successive generations of believers.

*Sūrah* 2:278 uses *baqiya* to call believers to abandon all remaining *ribā*, stressing moral integrity as a defining mark of the faithful remnant and a basis for divine accountability. It underscores the imperative for true followers, or the remnant community, to renounce all forms of *ribā* ("usury"). In addition to advocating prudence in financial matters, this verse calls for a comprehensive rejection of all usurious gains, based on emphasizing a divine command to abandon unethical practices.

The theological foundation of this verse aligns with "moral and eschatological guideposts," highlighting the importance of maintaining moral and ethical conduct amid challenges and societal pressures. The concept of *baqiya* includes a call for believers to uphold integrity in their dealings, reinforcing the notion that such ethical behavior is crucial for spiritual salvation and divine favor.

*Sūrah* 53:51 employs *baqiya* negatively to describe the fate of Thamūd, underscoring the immediate historical judgment that follows rejection of divine guidance.

*Baqiya* in *Sūrah* 55:27 refers to the enduring nature of Allāh's face, symbolizing His "attributes of beauty" (such as majesty and honor) and "attributes of majesty." In this context, the term *yabqā*, meaning "will endure" or "remain," emphasizes the eternal essence of Allāh. While everything transient ultimately comes to an end, Allāh and His attributes will last forever. This distinction highlights the concept of "ontological eschatology," which reinforces the permanence of divine existence amidst the impermanence of all creation.

In *Sūrah* 11:86, the term *baqiya* is intricately linked to Allāh, transforming into *baqiyyat Allāh*, which signifies that wealth acquired through honest means is far superior to that obtained through deceptive practices. The remnant, in this context, refers to those who diligently uphold justice by measuring and balancing their actions fairly while abstaining from any forms of illicit gains or relationships. The phrase *baqiyyatu l-lahi* ("Allāh's remnant/remainder") is significant in Islāmic eschatology, denoting the anticipated Mahdi ("Guided One" is a messianic figure in Islāmic eschatology), the divinely guided people who will be the last remnant of righteousness. Integrity and ethical conduct will endure among believers, positioning them as a beacon of hope in a world overshadowed by corruption and immorality.

In *Sūrah* 11:116, the term *baqiyyatin* ("remnant") appears in the genitive form, emphasizing that, despite their limited numbers, the moral caliber of

those who uphold righteousness remains profoundly impactful. These individuals strive to combat moral corruption and play a crucial role in society by their exemplary character, sound judgment, piety, and intelligence. Their presence serves as a symbol of hope and guidance amid widespread ethical decay. From this verse, it can be concluded that the remnant referred to in this *Sūrah* is classified as part of the “historical eschatological remnant,” signifying their enduring legacy and vital contributions to preserving moral integrity in challenging times.

## 7. Missiological Implications

This section explores the missiological implications of the six *Sūwar* discussed above and how they can be applied in mission work, particularly for a Seventh-day Adventist missionary engaging with the Qur'ānic concept of *baqiya* (“remnant”). While *baqiya* holds theological significance in Islām, its scope is not as comprehensive as the concept of the remnant found in the Bible. Nevertheless, this article demonstrates that the notion of the remnant is present within Islāmic *Kalām*. However, applying it effectively to mission work requires deeper clarification and contextual sensitivity, especially in recognizing the different theological frameworks that shape Islāmic and Christian understandings of the “remnant.”

Drawing from Islāmic *Kalām* and applying its insights to contemporary Seventh-day Adventist readers, the rich heritage of Islāmic *Kalām* can provide valuable perspectives on the concept of the “remnant” and its derivatives (e.g., *baqiya shadduhu*). Reflecting on these themes helps Adventists better understand the remnant's role and mission and engage more meaningfully in dialogue with Muslim friends.

### 7.1 Endurance Through Hardships

In both Islām and Adventist theology, the remnant is called to endure trials and adversity with faith. Islāmic *Kalām* emphasizes *Ṣabr* (“Endurance” or “Patience”) and perseverance in the face of challenges, which can resonate with Adventists who believe they are called to remain faithful through end-time tribulations. In Gene Boyd's words, “a remnant will have a practical way to endure the great tribulation.”<sup>57</sup> Priscilla Degnan Fritz, in her book *The Remnant: Living in Triumph*, stated that the “remnant will endure some

<sup>57</sup> Gene Boyd, *Enduring 666: The Left Ahead* (Meadville, PA: Christian Faith, 2022), 135.

severe hardships because of the sin of the world system and Satan, the rejector.”<sup>58</sup> In order for one to be part of the “remnant” that will endure, one has to keep his eyes focused on Christ.

## 7.2 Challenge of Preservation

Just as Muslims strive to preserve their faith and practices amidst the influences of a changing world, Seventh-day Adventists are tasked with preserving biblical truth and their prophetic identity. Islāmic teachings on maintaining integrity and adherence to core principles can offer encouragement in upholding the beliefs and practices of the remnant.

The *NIV Study Bible* highlights a significant point: God faithfully fulfilled His promise to preserve a remnant. This remnant was preserved during Elisha’s time (cf. 1 Kgs 19:18; Rom 11:4). A portion of Israel also joined with Judah (cf. 2 Chr 30:25; 34:9; Isa 10:20–22; Rom 9:27–29). Additionally, a remnant was preserved from the Assyrian threat (see 2 Kgs 19:4, 9–31; Mic 5:6–8).<sup>59</sup>

## 7.3 Divine Peace and Allāh’s Presence

The *al-Tābūt* (“Ark of the Covenant”) in the Qur’ān, which held the Ten Commandments, contains two significant elements: the “remnant” and the *Sakīnah* (“tranquility”). Beyond the discussion on the concept of the remnant, this verse emphasizes the peace that comes solely through Allāh’s presence. For missionaries, this presents an opportunity to highlight the presence of Allāh as reflected in the life of Jesus Christ (عيسى المسيح, *Īsā al-Masīḥ*), drawing connections to biblical teachings on peace (e.g., John 14:27; 16:31–33; Phil 4:6–7; and Rom 5:1).

The Hebrew *Shekinah* and the Qur’ānic word *Sakīna* are parallel. The term *Shekinah* refers to God’s presence or “indwelling” among His people, specifically manifested through the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was a small box overlaid with gold, with two golden angels positioned in reverence on the Mercy Seat. The *Shekinah*, God’s presence, shone forth from between these two angels above the Mercy Seat, representing the only visible manifestation of God on earth.

<sup>58</sup> Priscilla Degnan Fritz, *The Remnant: Living in Triumph* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1998), 77.

<sup>59</sup> John H. Stek, Kenneth L. Barker, and Mark L. Strauss, ed., *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 698.

The *Shekinah* represented the place sanctified by God's presence—referred to at times in the Bible as His “glory” (*kabod*) and later as His “presence” (*Shekinah*). The Israelites were taught that this presence, though never depicted, was especially present between the wings of the cherubim resting atop the cover of the chest known as the Ark of the Covenant (2 Kgs 19:15).<sup>60</sup>

For Muslims, who follow the teachings of the Qur'ān, *Sakīna* (“tranquility”) has a rather specific biblical parallel to “the God in the Ark of the Covenant along with ‘relics’ of Moses and Aaron.”<sup>61</sup>

A Christian missionary can draw a parallel between the concept of *peace* in Islām and Christianity. Just as God instills peace in the hearts of believers in Islām (*Sūwar* 48:4; 13:28), the teachings of the Bible similarly reflect this idea, where Christ offers rest for humanity, as seen in Matt 11:28–29. An authentic *Hādīth* states that “no people get together in a house of the houses of Allah (i.e. a mosque), reciting the Book of Allah, and learning it together among themselves, but calmness (*sakinah*) comes down to them, (Divine) mercy covers them (from above), and the angels surround them, and Allah makes a mention of them among those who are with Him.”<sup>62</sup>

From a Christian perspective, the study of the Scriptures, while it is a guide to life, “its teachings will lead the soul upward. It will elevate the mind, improve the character, and give peace and joy to the heart.”<sup>63</sup> Additionally, in the eschatological age, the second coming of Christ will bring peace and annihilate evil (Nah 1:9). This opens the door for a deeper discussion on how *peace* is a fulfillment of Christ and invites reflection on the Christian understanding of salvation and hope.

#### 7.4 Remnant and Eschatological Continuity

In *Sūrah* 2:248, the term *baqiyya*—mentioned in connection with the offspring of Mūsā (Moses) and Hārūn (Aaron)—denotes the continuity and preservation of a faithful remnant, primarily represented by the *Tabūt* (“Ark of the Covenant”). This Ark, containing relics of the prophets, symbolizes

<sup>60</sup> Francis E. Peters, *The Monotheists: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan, 2003), 2:168.

<sup>61</sup> Peters, *The Monotheists*, 2:169.

<sup>62</sup> Sunan Abu Dawood Book of Prayer (Kitab Al-Salat): Detailed Injunctions about Witr Hadith 1450. Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo, *Explanation of the Forty Hadiths of Nawawi* (Denver, CO: Al-Basheer Publications, 1999), 1310.

<sup>63</sup> Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 100.

Allāh's enduring presence and favor toward *Banī Isrā'īl* (children of Israel), though some interpreters also see in it a broader sense of spiritual continuity among their descendants. This motif in Islāmīc *Kalām* resonates with the idea of the "remnant" in the Bible, particularly as seen in the eschatological context of various books, such as the book of Revelation.<sup>64</sup>

From an eschatological perspective, the "remnant" will triumph because their God rules.<sup>65</sup> Walter Brueggeman said: "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.... The faithful remnant stands as a witness to the alternative future that God will bring."<sup>66</sup> A faithful eschatological remnant community plays a crucial role in pointing toward God's future promises and, in turn, embodies eschatological hope.

In Robert Gibbs' words,

The remnant is not the victors, nor truly the victims who have only their own suffering to witness. The remnant waits and promises to remain. Or perhaps it is promised to remain—it is assigned a post it cannot renounce: it must remain until the redemption. As a history of a remnant, history is the witness of suffering in anticipation, a witness to exposure that cannot be renounced.<sup>67</sup>

A Christian missionary is called to build common eschatological bridges and themes that emphasize faithfulness and hope in God's kingdom. In doing so, the missionary should avoid dismissing the Muslim perspective when introducing Christian eschatological ideas.

George R. Knight described "Adventism's vision of itself as a prophetic end-time remnant force in world history. That is to say, Adventism understands itself as a community with a special prophetic role in the last days,

<sup>64</sup> Joseph Kenny said that from a Qur'ānic perspective, "in practice, any Biblical passage which agrees with the Qur'ān is considered a true remnant of the original books which are lost; any passage which disagrees with the Qur'ān is considered spurious" (Joseph Kenny, *Comparative Concepts in the Bible and the Quran* [Dublin: Dominican, 1990], 11). What Kenny meant is that the Qur'ān is regarded as the final criterion for determining the authenticity of earlier scriptures, in the form of agreement versus disagreement. The former affirms and preserves; the latter denotes corruption.

<sup>65</sup> Erwin W. Lutzer, *The Cross in the Shadow of the Crescent: An Informed Response to Islam's War with Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013), 115–17.

<sup>66</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress press, 1978), 13.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Gibbs, *Why Ethics?: Signs of Responsibilities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 375.

called to bear God's message to the world within the flow of history before the end. The Adventist solution is not humanistic but theistic: it is God's effort, not humanity's, that will establish the kingdom."<sup>68</sup>

In both faiths, Adventist and Muslim, there is a strong sense of hope and belief in the continuation of God's people, despite adversity. For Muslims, hope is found in God's guidance and ultimate justice. For Adventists, hope rests in the Second Coming of Christ and the fulfillment of God's promises to His remnant, while in Islam Jesus (ʿĪsā) is also expected to return at the end of time to restore justice and defeat evil, though this return is understood differently from the Christian view of His divine and redemptive role.

### 7.5 Call for Ethical Living

*Sūrah* 2:278 imparts numerous lessons. I would like to highlight one crucial aspect that is notably neglected among Christians, living in the end times. A defining characteristic of the Qur'ānic remnant is the commitment to ethical living in financial dealings.

Adventists have long emphasized that they are the remnant of Bible prophecy, defined by two key characteristics: "keeping the commandments of God" and "having the faith of Jesus" (cf. Rev 14:12).<sup>69</sup> However, it appears that we have often stressed the concept of the remnant in an abstract sense, while overlooking its practical application in daily life. This neglect is not due to a lack of biblical teaching, but rather a shortcoming on the part of *theologians*. The teachings of the Qur'ān concerning the remnant, who adhere to ethical living and practical godliness in financial dealings, offer a valuable reminder. Adventists, too, should emphasize that God's end-time remnant must be marked by ethical behavior in all areas of life, particularly in financial matters. In short, as the "remnant" of Bible prophecy, we are called to be good stewards of financial resources. The Bible provides ample guidance on how Christians should handle financial responsibilities.

The book of James does remind us, "faith without action is dead" (cf. Jas 2:14–26), so God's end-time remnant must embody their faith through ethical conduct also, reflecting His justice and righteousness in all aspects of life.

<sup>68</sup> George R. Knight, *If I Were the Devil: Seeing Through the Enemy's Smokescreen Contemporary Challenges Facing Adventist* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2007), 58.

<sup>69</sup> The Adventist understanding of remnant theology recognizes that Revelation's use of the Greek word *loipos* refers to both a faithful remnant and a counterfeit remnant. For further discussion, see Leslie N. Pollard, "The Function of *Loipos* in Contexts of Judgment and Salvation in the Book of Revelation" (PhD diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 2007).

The book of Micah, does instruct us to “do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic 6:8). This includes using our resources to help those in need.

The Qur’ānic focus draws our attention to concepts that already exist in biblical teachings but may have been overlooked. For me, this serves as a valuable reminder and an opportunity to reevaluate our understanding of the end-time remnant through the lens of guiding not only our financial decisions but also our practical, ethical, and everyday dealings with others. This is not about altering our doctrine on the end-time remnant but rather about revisiting and learning from others who preceded us (Adventism), including Islāmic teachings.

Micah 6:8 has often been referred to as the “code for righteous living” or the “essence of true religion” due to its succinct and powerful message on how God expects His people to live justly and righteously. Christians should recognize that, at its core, the book of Micah conveys the message of the Old Testament prophets, highlighting ethical living that encompasses social righteousness.<sup>70</sup>

If Adventists are the remnant of Bible prophecy who uphold the keeping of the Commandments, then these commandments emphasize two key aspects: vertical and horizontal. The vertical aspect highlights our allegiance to the Creator, calling us to “walk humbly with your God” (Mic 6:8b), which means to “live in harmony with the principles of the first table of the Decalogue” (Mic 6:8a).<sup>71</sup> The horizontal aspect urges us “to do justly, and to love mercy,” underscoring ethical living virtues that encapsulate the intent of the “second table of the Decalogue.”<sup>72</sup> This perfectly summarizes the message of Micah 6:8.

## 7.6 A Call to Abandon Unethical Practices

*Sūrah* 2:278 calls for individuals to abandon unethical practices, such as *ribā* (“usury”). For missionaries, this presents a valuable opportunity to engage with Muslim believers in discussions about social justice and economic ethics. The exploration of the word *baqiya* emphasizes the significance of

<sup>70</sup> Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 142.

<sup>71</sup> “Hath shewed thee” [Mic 6:8], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC), 2nd ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976–1980), 4:1028.

<sup>72</sup> “Hath shewed thee” (Mic 6:8), *SDABC*, 4:1028.

moral integrity and active involvement in promoting ethical standards while combating corruption as part of their missionary efforts. The Qur'ānic remnant is to abstain from any form of *ribā* ("usury"). This reveals the significance in dealing with others, specifically in economic dealings.

Adventists can embody this by practicing fair and compassionate "financial stewardship," such as "offering interest-free assistance" or "supporting" those in need without seeking personal gain. Such actions reflect the biblical ideals of justice and stewardship, demonstrating that genuine faithfulness is expressed through both responsible resource management and ethical care for others. The Bible repeatedly addresses the prohibition of *usury* and the ethical concerns related to charging excessive interest (cf. Exod 22:25; Lev 25:35–37; Deut 23:19–20; Ezek 18:13; Ps 15:5).

These Scriptures consistently reflect a biblical mandate for fairness and compassion in financial dealings, particularly to protect the vulnerable from exploitation. Finances, in particular, will be an area where end-time Babylon (church and state) will ensnare many, regardless of their understanding of doctrines, such as the Sabbath or the state of the dead, to mention but a few (1 Tim 6:9–10). As previously mentioned, the remnant should not be viewed as an abstract concept, but rather as a call to practical righteous living that should be evident in the lives of church members. A lack of ethical living does not stem from a shortage of biblical instruction, but rather due to a possible lack of emphasis by *theologians* on highlighting this aspect as a defining trait of the end-time remnant.

### 7.7 Missionary Fixes Their Eyes on Jesus

Missionaries should center their attention on God while working in the mission field. Humanity is mortal, God is eternal. Missionaries should emphasize the everlasting nature of God and His attributes, as highlighted in the Qur'an and the Bible.

*Sūrah* 55:27 reassures Muslim believers of God's unchanging essence, emphasizing that He has neither beginning nor end. The Psalmist has the same message: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Ps 90:2). Christians teaching has always been, "Turn your eyes from the imperfections of others and fix them steadfastly on Christ."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1964), 94.